Family Readiness Group TELEPHONE TREE

What is it?

Does your Family Readiness Group have one?

What You Will Learn About FRG Telephone Trees

- Requirements and Regulations
- What is a Phone Tree
- Goals of Phone Tree
- How they are developed
- How they work
- Types of Calls
- Where to File Your Phone Tree
- Payment for Calls
- Phone Tree Callers
- Crisis Intervention

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INTRODUCTION

Learn what this system is and how it enables Family Readiness Groups to quickly and accurately disseminate information to their Families.

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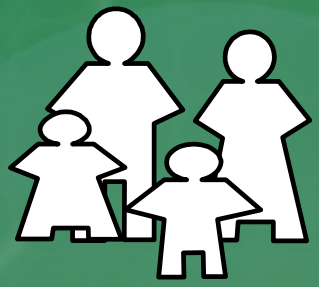
INTRODUCTION

Additionally, learn why telephone trees are one of the most important and useful tools a Family Readiness Group can develop and maintain.



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Family Readiness Requirements

- Certain items are reviewed during unit inspections which indicate if a unit has a viable Family Program
  - FRG Telephone Tree developed and current
  - FRG Telephone Tree tested & documented

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Family Readiness Requirements

- **Family Readiness Group Telephone Trees are to be established by Regulation:**
  - **Forces Command (FORSCOM) 500-3-3**
    - **Task 2-I-21 b.**
  - **Army Regulation (AR) 608-1**
    - **Appendix J-2 d.**
  - **Army Regulation 600-20**
    - **Paragraph 5-10a. (b).**
  - **Operation Ready**
    - **Pages 29, 41-42**

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What Is a Phone Tree?

- System used to quickly & accurately disseminate information to unit Families
- Used in emergencies
- Used for rumor control
- Similar to unit's alert roster
- Used for wellness checks
- Lead Volunteer has oversight responsibility for its completion

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Goals of Phone Tree?

- Passes important information to Families
  - upcoming FRG events
  - unit's status
  - unit news

- Assures Families that there is someone to assist during Family emergencies

- Or someone that they can express their concerns to - someone who will listen

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Goals of Phone Tree?

- Can help improve the quality of life and morale of the unit
- Fosters sense of belonging – because every Family is included (can improve service member retention)
- Helps to limit rumors

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How Is It Developed?

- The Phone Tree is developed from the Service Member Family Information Form
  - (SDNG Form 600-12-11R)
- Form is completed by service member with assistance of FRG volunteers or unit personnel
  - Contains points of contact information for service member

MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- **<u>Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality of Family Member Information.</u>**
- To protect Families' personal data from unauthorized use, only key leaders should have a complete copy of the FRG membership roster or the phone tree
- Social Security Numbers and other sensitive information should be omitted
- Careful control of all copies of the rosters and phone trees

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MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- **<u>Ensure Privacy and Confidentiality of Family Member Information.</u>**
- Only give Key Caller the portion of phone tree needed for their phone tree group
- Destroy obsolete copies
- Collect copies when caller or leader moves or leaves the job

Basic Phone Tree Flowchart

File copies of phone tree at the unit in the Unit's Family Readiness binder & the State Family Readiness Office.

1. Develop groups based on geographic location to minimize long distance calls. To expedite calling, try to keep 6 to 8 per group depending on unit size.
2. **Appoint alternate Key callers** in case primary Key callers are not available.
3. Include home, work and other alternate points of contact to include email addresses for each family. **Do informal test of tree periodically**.
4. When calling, be accurate, be brief, be clear, summarize, give point of contact number, log each call and **report back to Lead Volunteer**

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How Does It Work?

- Unit commander, lead volunteer or State Family Readiness Office can initiate the phone tree
- Lead volunteer contacts Key callers for each group
- Key callers contact Families in their group
- Calling continues until all Families are contacted (message left or 3 attempts made)
- Key callers notify lead volunteer upon completion of all calls or attempts to reac

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PAYMENT FOR CALLS

- Calling cards are available from the State Family Readiness Office
- Reimbursement for calls through the State Family Readiness Office is another option
  - Requires copy of phone bills with calls highlighted
  - Attach phone bill to SDNG Form 600-12-8B (telephone cost reimbursement form found in telephone tree handbook)
  - Submit to Family Readiness Office

WHERE TO FILE YOUR TELEPHONE TREE?

- File a copy at the unit in the Commander's Family Readiness Purple Binder
- Send copy to the State Family Readiness Office

Types of Calls

- **Phone Tree Calls**
- **We Care Calls**
- **Critical Incident Calls**

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Phone Tree Calls

- Initiated by the Commander, Lead Volunteer or State Family Readin Office to disseminate informatio families

- Is brief (just a fev minutes)
- Scripted

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We Care Calls

- Normally made **during mobilization**, however can be made at other times to help build rapport with Families.
- Focus on well-being of Families
- More relaxed than phone tree call
- May last longer than 5 minutes
- Don't necessarily need a script
- Scheduled once a month or as determined by FRG

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Critical Incident Calls

- Only made in the event of a death(s)

  of a service member(s). Calls on made by the State Family Readiness Office after deceased service member's Family has bee notified.

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State Family Readiness Office Critical Incident Calling Policy

- State Family Readiness Office will be the **ONLY initiating authority** to activate calls after authorization from the State Personnel Office – approved by the Adjutant General
- State Family Readiness Office has a **Designated** & trained Calling Team
- Calls only made to the affected unit's FRG members after Family(ies) of deceased service member(s) have been notified

Key Callers

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We Care & Phone Tree Callers

Characteristics of Callers:

- Good Listeners
- Friendly
- Empathetic
- Truthful but Tactful
- Positive Attitude
- Maintain Confidentiality

KEY CALLERS Responsibilities

- Signs volunteer agreement DD2793
  - **Makes Statutory volunteer** which serves in official capacity in direct support of the National Guard Family Program like FRG Telephone Tree Key Callers.
  - Record their volunteer hours
  - Agreement states that they donate time and services to FRG projects and activities

KEY CALLERS Responsibilities

- Signs volunteer agreement DD2793
  - Recognized as official in matters of **tort claims** & for purposes of **reimbursement** under provision 10, US Code 1588
  - Can be reimbursed for incidental expenses
  - May be placed on Invitational Travel Authorizations (ITAs)

KEY CALLERS Responsibilities

- Calls Families to provide information
  - Uses script
- Maintains log of calls
  - Both made and received
- Refers Families to appropriate resources
  - Family Assistance Center 1-800-658-3930
- Reports any issues/questions to Phone Tree Chairperson
  - Ensure follow up is completed

KEY CALLERS Responsibilities

- Maintains confidentiality
  - Dispels rumors, discourages gossip
- Makes “We Care” calls
  - As determined by FRG
- Reports updates to their portion of Phone Tree
  - Address and phone number changes
- Welcomes new Families assigned to their portion of Phone Tree

WHAT TO SAY?

- **BE BRIEF** (try to keep calls to 5 mins) unless making “We Care” Calls
- **BE ACCURATE** (stick to the script)
- **BE CLEAR**
- **SUMMARIZE**
- **ASK if they have questions about the subject of the call**
- GIVE THEM A **POINT OF CONTACT #**
- Use a **SCRIPT – provided by Lead Volunteer**

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Example of Script
(From FRG Phone Tree Chairperson)

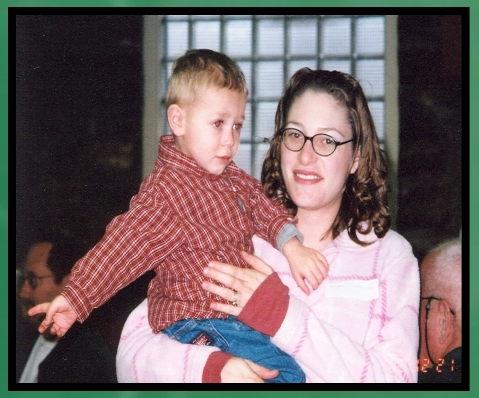
- Hello, this is _____with the _____
- (state your name) (state your unit)
- Family Readiness Group. Today we are calling to introduce ourselves and to test the FRG telephone tree to ensure it works and that your contact information is correct.
- I have volunteered to be a caller for our phone tree and am assigned to the portion of the tree your Family is on. I will normally be the person contacting you when our phone tree is activated.
- We also want to ensure you have the Family Assistance Center Phone Number should you have an emergency, questions or concerns. It is 1-800-658-3930.
- Do you have any questions?

Example of Script
(From FRG Phone Tree Chairperson)

- Directions for implementing the script will also indicate:
  - Whether it is ok for the caller to leave a message with the family
  - How many attempts the caller should make to reach a family
  - Reminder for caller to ensure family's contact information is correct and to forward changes to the FRG Telephone Tree Chairperson

We Care & Phone Tree Calls

Tips for Key Callers:



- **DO**
- Maintain a log of all calls
- Know resources available – refer to Family Assistance Center
- Do try more than once to call a Family if there is no answer the first time (try at least 3 times)
- Give them a point of contact number
- Ensure any necessary follow up is done

We Care & Phone Tree Calls

Tips for Key Callers:

- **DO**
- Always identify yourself and your unit FRG at the beginning of the call
- Ask if this is convenient time to talk
- Establish a rapport with your Families
- Maintain confidentiality and privac

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We Care & Phone Tree Calls

Tips for Key Callers:

- **DO NOT**
- Take it personally if a caller is rude or obnoxious
- Feel guilty if you are unable to help them, do your best, refer them
- Go beyond your own limits in providing assistance
- Gossip or repeat rumors

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MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

- **<u>Volunteer Services Confidentiality Statement Phone Tree Key Callers</u>**

- I acknowledge and agree that disclosure by me of confidential or private information obtained by me in the course of my volunteer status could be cause for termination from my volunteer position.

Getting Started as a Phone Tree Key Caller

- **What You Need:**

- A list of assigned Families and phone numbers for your branch of the phone tree,
- A calling card,
- An ample supply of message log forms pen/pencil,
- A copy of the calling script,
- Resource numbers and information - Family Assistance Center, 1-800-658-3930

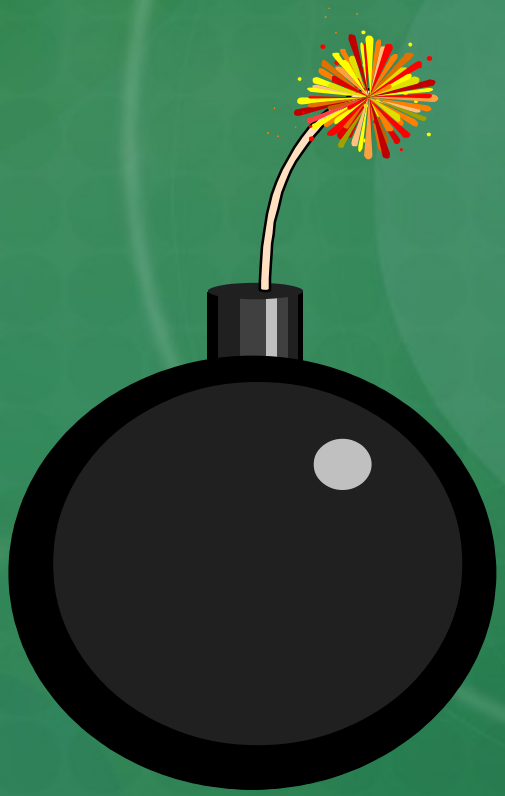
Family Assistance Center

Recording Your Volunteer Hours

- **Register on guardfamily.org website**
  - Create user name and password
- **Go to *Activity Tracking***
  - Enter your volunteer hours

- **If you do not have a computer**
  - **Record hours on SDNG 600-12-12R (volunteer time record) and mail form to State Family Readiness Office**

Dealing With People When Making Calls



CRISIS INTERVENTION

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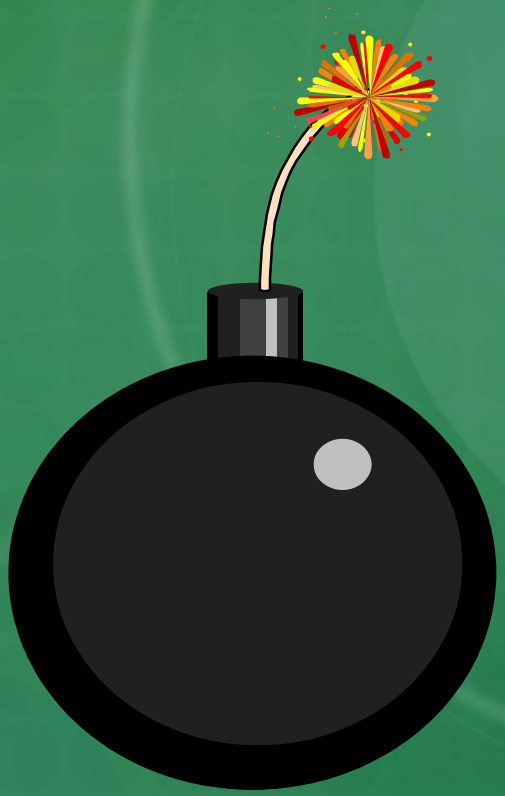
CRISIS INTERVENTION



CRISIS GOAL

- To allow the people involved to resolve the situation themselves.
- Give them control because in a crisis we feel as if we have NO control.

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BASIC RULES
Crisis Intervention

LISTEN
VALIDATE
HONESTY
RESPECT
CONFIDENTIALITY
REFER
FOLLOW-UP

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LISTEN

Let them speak

Do not give advice

Let them take the lead

Work toward clarification

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VALIDATE

We all want to be validated

Avoid being negative

Be empathetic - (talk on a feeling level)

Focus on now – not the past

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RESPECT

- Treat them as you would want to be treated
- Don’t take things personally
- Help them to solve the problem on their own

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Protect and honor people's privacy.

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HONESTY

- Do not promise things you can not produce.

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REFER

- You are not a social worker.
- Don’t confuse them with multiple referrals.
- Don’t call anyone without their permission.

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FOLLOW-UP

Always, Always Ensure Follow Up Is Completed

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Tips for Dealing with Individuals in Crisis

- Understand what coping stage the individual is in
  - Gives an indication if individual will be receptive to help
- Recognize that an individual will be experiencing a range of emotions
  - Will want information or assistance to solve problem

Tips for Dealing with Individuals in Crisis

- Treat the individual with care
  - Listen carefully and speak calmly
- Do not make promises that can't be kept
  - Refer
- If individual rambles when speaking
  - Try to identify major issue, that can be solved by them easily, focus on the present
  - Problem resolution can calm them and build their confidence

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Thank You for Your Dedication and Commitment

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